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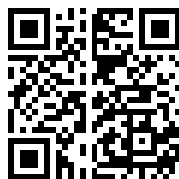
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AN ESSAY
ON THE LANGUAGE OF
LAY LE FREINE.

ACADEMICAL DISSERTATION

FOR OBTAINING OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL DEGREE

BY

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WITH PERMISSION OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL FACULTY PUBLICLY
DISCURSED AT THE JURIDICAL AUDITORY
IN UPSALA.

MAY 25, 1869 AT 10 O'CLOCK A. M.

I.

STOCKHOLM, 1869.

P. A. NORSTEDT & SÖNER
KONGL. BOKTRYCKARE.



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ABBREVIATIONS.

Ags.	=	Anglo-Saxon.
Engl.	=	English.
Fr.	=	Modern French.
Germ.	=	German.
Midd. E.	=	Middle English.
N. E.	=	New English.
O. E.	=	Old English.
O. Fr.	=	Old French.
S.-Sax.	=	Semi-Saxon.

LAY LE FREINE belongs to the numerous metrical romances, which during more than two centuries formed an important part of the English literature. Generally, if not always, these romances were translations from the French, and in this language, the mother-tongue of romantic fiction, they had long attracted the admiration of the Anglo-Norman nobility, by whom, in fact, the taste for this kind of poetry had been introduced into England. French at last lost its ascendancy, but the literary taste long remaining unchanged, the new-born english literature was nearly exclusively enriched by translations from French romances. In this new form the songs of the *trouveurs* rapidly spread even to inferior classes of the nation, and "Kyng Alisaunder" and "Richard Coer de Lion" were willingly listened to by the common people, long after they had ceased to be heard in the palaces of the nobles.

The specimen of the English metrical romances we are here going to treat, is certainly to be dated from the first half of fourteenth century, which was the era of their greatest popularity with all classes in England. It is a translation from a French original, *Lay del Freisne*, by the famous Anglo-Norman poetess, Marie de France, who during the reign of Henry III resided several years in England, where, time was spent in relating "such stories, as she knew to be true and to have been formed into lays by the Britons". This "antient and curious little poem" is, according to Mr. Ellis, "both in point of language and versification of more merit than any poem of the very early period, at which it is written". As, however, it cannot be

supposed to be generally known, we give an account of the story, now and then introducing, by way of illustrations of the language, short extracts from the text, as it occurs in Weber *). The spelling being considerably modernized, these extracts will easily be understood.

After a short prologue the author tells us, that "in the west cuntre woned tway knyghtes", married men, rich and good friends. One of these knights soon became the father of two sons at once. He immediately sent to communicate the happy event to his friend, who highly rejoiced at this unexpected message; not so his wife, who was, we are told, "a proude dame and an envious", and who most cruelly and shamefully slandered the poor young mother on account of her fecundity. Shortly afterwards she was, however, herself delivered of two daughters. This was a fearful stroke to the haughty dame, and after a terrible struggle she made the pious resolution

. to take her chaunce,
and sle one child and do penance.

By the friendly intercession of a young maiden in the house, this plan was, however, considerably modified, the lady readily accepting the offer of her friend to carry the child to a convent, where, as they hoped, it would no doubt be taken care of.

[The lady] toke a riche baudekine
That hir lord brought fram Constantine,
And lapped the litel maiden therin;
And toke a ring of gold fin,
And on hir right arm it knitt
With a lace of silke therin pilt:
And whoso hir founde shuld haue in mehde,
That it were comen of riche kende.

The maiden accordingly left the house with the child. Having reached the appointed convent she carefully laid

*) Metrical Romances, Vol. I p. 357.

down her precious burden in the hollow stem of a beautiful ash-tree, close by the church-door.

With that it gane to dawe light;
The foules up, and song on bough,
And acre-men yede to the plough.
The maiden turned oyain anon,
And tok the waye he hadde er gon.

The child was brought up by the kind people of the abbey, and having found it in the ash, they called it Le Freine, this being the name of that tree "after the language of Breteyn". The years passed on, and the little girl had grown a fair maiden, the fairest in all England. The report of her beauty was widely spread, and it soon induced a young and rich knight, called Sir Guroun, to visit the convent for the purpose of seeing the praised maid. And so enchanted was he by her "louesom eighen, her rode so bright", that he immediately fell in love with her. Nor was she free from such tender feelings towards him; she soon consented to follow him to his castle, bringing with her nothing but "hir pel and hir ring".

The happiness of the lovers was, however, of short duration, for, after many vain attempts, the friends of the knight prevailed upon him to abandon the simple Le Freine and to woo the beautiful daughter of a noble knight in the neighbourhood. The new match was soon concluded but,

Allas! that he no hadde y-wite,
Er the forward were y-smite,
That hye, and his leman also,
Sostren were and tvinnes to.

This the author tells us by the way, but it was still unknown to Sir Guroun and the others, and splendid festivities were prepared for the day, when the happy couple was going to be united. But on the very wedding-day the mother of the two maidens, to her utter astonishment, discovered the "riche baudekyn", of Le Freine, with which the well-meaning girl had adorned the "Spousaile-bed", and being

informed to whom it belonged, she acknowledged Le Freine to be her daughter. The first confusion being over, all was arranged in a very satisfactory manner; Sir Guroun married Le Freine, and as for Le Codre, the other sister, she soon became the wife of a gentle knight.

Thus ends the lay of tho maidens bright,
Le Frain and Le Codre y-hight.

The criticism of the poetical merit and literary value of Lay le Freine is foreign to our subject. It is from a linguistic point of view we here have to consider it. But before proceeding to such an examination, we must make some preparatory remarks on the state of the English language at the time, to which this song is to be ascribed. This being the first half of the fourteenth century, we are thus referred to the very formation period of the English language, extending from about the middle of the thirteenth to the middle of the fourteenth century. As, however, no exact notion of this period can be conveyed without a previous consideration of the elements out of which the language was then formed, we introduce the view of the Old-English by a short account of the preceding period.

There are found the proximate sources, from which the different elements of the English language were derived. This period was of a long duration, its beginning being dated from shortly after the Norman conquest. It is a stirring time, the time of many languages, and the name by which it is generally known, the Semi-Saxon period, is given only with respect to the actual state of the vernacular tongue. This was however far from being the only or even the chief language of Great Britain in these times; the conquest had brought it a mighty rival, the French, and the importance of Latin as the language of

the learned was constantly increasing; nor ought the considerable Celtic and Old Norse elements in certain provinces to be left unnoticed. — Yet Semi-Saxon and Norman French were of the greatest importance. The former was spoken by the great body of the people but like the people by which it was used, it widely differed from that, which it had succeeded. The grammatical strictness of the Anglo-Saxon was relaxed, its nice distinctions were simplified, the terminations shortened, often even incorrectly employed; the inflectional system was broken up, but the simpler, positional form, had not yet become established. As for the causes, by which these important changes were effected, they may be attributed chiefly to the innate tendencies of synthetic (complex) languages towards decomposition of grammatical forms and to the influence of French and Latin, facilitated by the state of the Saxon population after the conquest. By that great social revolution the language of a free and independent people had become the despised idiom of serfs and bondmen, who had little time to spare for its cultivation; literary pursuits were the prerogative of their mighty masters, the Norman invaders.

During this oppressed state of the Saxon tongue, French was raised to dignity and importance. It was the language of the Nobility and, beside the Latin, that of government and legislation; it was the fashionable language of the age, constantly gaining ground in the new country, and the great literary treasures, to which it gave access, made it still more attractive to learn. Nor was it much affected by the vernacular idiom of the country; the constant intercourse with France enabled it to retain its purity of accent and grammatical correctness, and thus the admixture of Saxon elements was long successfully resisted.

This power of keeping free from foreign influence is in a still higher degree characteristic of the Semi-Saxon, the stock of words remaining nearly unchanged during the most part of this period. Thus in the extensive poem of *Lagamon* only some few Latin or French words are found.

This unnatural separation could not but at last give way. Mighty political events had changed the minds of the long di-

vided races; they began to feel the necessity of uniting into a strong and independent nationality, and from about the first quarter of the thirteenth century the strongly marked distinctions between the two peoples and their languages were gradually diminishing. These are the preparations for the following period, the Old English, to which the union of the rivalizing elements is chiefly to be ascribed.

In the fusion of French and Saxon which then took place, the latter proved to be the most vigorous; this was a natural consequence of the state of the two languages at that time. — By constant hostilities with France, the French had been deprived of its support in the mother-country. Being thus reduced to its own forces it could not hold out the uneven struggle with the vernacular, and although it long continued to be used, especially for official purposes (until the year 1483 it was the language of parliament), its importance was constantly decreasing.

The Saxon elements had always been strong although oppressed. In spite of tyranny and exclusion from social and political influence the Saxons had retained their nationality, even their national pride. If they were despised by the invaders, they despised them in their turn, and Robin Hood, the famous outlaw, who ventured to brave the Norman sheriff and his law, became their favorite hero. The same defiance of the Norman influence we have already observed in point of language. This national spirit being aroused and the resistance of the Normans being weakened, the Saxon element must naturally predominate in the new people and in the newly-framed speech. And, in fact, it is from the Saxon that English has received its characteristic stamp, the French being restricted to a comparatively unimportant influence on the increase of the vocabulary. The respective importance of French and Saxon as component parts of the English language may be illustrated by noticing the difficulty of framing a whole sentence out of words purely Norman, whereas this is easily done with merely Saxon words; only the verbs, substantives, adjectives and adverbs are of mixed origin; all the other classes

of words as articles, auxiliaries etc. are nearly exclusively Saxon.

This admixture of foreign words would hardly have been possible in Anglo-Saxon; a great power of forming new words secured that language against the encroachments of foreign elements. It was indeed a reluctant and unreceptive language, and so accustomed was the people to intelligible words, that the translators of the Bible were obliged to find out vernacular expressions for many scripture names, which in English generally retain the oriental form. In Old English this is changed. There the destruction of the Anglo-Saxon inflexions is carried further still than in Semi-Saxon; the language has become positional instead of inflexional, the syntactical relation of words is indicated by the place they occupy in the sentence, seldom by terminations. Thus even the facility of forming new words was considerably diminished, and, the resisting power being weakened, free admittance must be accorded to numerous words of foreign origin. But on the other hand the assimilative power increased; the amalgamation process, by which the different ingredients were gradually melted down into one language was performed during this period.

However, the union thus effected long remained rough and imperfect; the foreign ingredients could not easily be accommodated to the new rules, and even the forms of the vernacular were far from settled. The harmony of the language was not established till after the rise of a national literature in the following, the Middle English, period, but the necessary preparations for such a literature were the work of the Old English; then the foreign words were gradually naturalized and the new language grew more and more familiar even to the lower classes of the people.

Concerning the respective share of prose and poetry in popularizing the language, different opinions are held by philologists. Nor do we pretend to solve the question. We only observe that in this respect a considerable influence must be attributed to the metrical romances; being translated from the French they naturally retained numerous French words, and, exceedingly popular as they were,

they must be considered to have mightily contributed to familiarize these words among all classes of the nation. Hence their linguistic importance is very great; they show the forms both of Saxon and French words when first introduced into English, and they also convey a tolerably exact idea of the proportion, in which these two constituents contributed to the new language.

In the analysis of the language of *Lay le Freine*, we begin with the Substantives, considering them with regard to their etymologies and grammatical peculiarities. The etymological remarks will be confined to the derivation of the words from their immediate sources, Saxon and French, and to the rules for their transition from these languages. Reference will also be made to the modern English forms.

It has already been mentioned, that in Weber's collection the spelling is considerably modernized. The most important deviation from the manuscript, made by this author, is the use of *th*, *gh* and *y* instead of the corresponding Saxon letters. In citations from Weber the spelling introduced by him has been retained; in other cases the old letters are used *).

Etymologies.

v. 3. *Lay*, probably from O. Fr. *lai* or *lais*, which has been borrowed either from a Germanic *lag* (Old Norse), or from the Celtic *llais*. In O. E. it had also the signification of N. E. *law*, and it is then, like this word, derived from Ags. *lagu* or *lag*, (Koch: *læg*), a single *g* being often vocalised at the end of a word; so also in *day* v. 156, Ags. *dæg*. See v. 57.

v. 4. *Thing*; Ags. *þing*, which, according to Wedgewood, originally had the meaning of discourse, law-suit, having afterwards assumed its N. E. signification. Bosworth

*) The words in the passages, which, being illegible in the manuscript, have been composed by Weber and Ellis (v. 115—128 and v. 335—402) will of course not be examined.

and Ettmüller, on the contrary, give as its primitive sense, "whatever has weight", connecting it with the verb *thingan*, to be heavy, which certainly must be the correct derivation of the word. For an analogous change of signification compare Germ. *Sache*, this word uniting the sense of Ags. *sacu*, dispute, and of N. E. *thing*. In the signification of council it seems to have early ceased to be used; neither Coleridge nor Halliwell give it.

v. 5. *Wer*, other O. E. forms are *werre*, *weorre*, *worre*, M. E. *warre*, N. E. *war*. Diez and Koch derive this word from O. Fr. *werre* or *guerre* (O. High German *werra*). As, however, already in Ags. (Sax. Chron.) the forms *verre* and *vyrre* occur (Ettmüller), Mueller may be right in considering these forms as the immediate origin of the word, supposing the signification of the Ags. forms to have been influenced by the Fr. The changed sound of the vowel must be attributed to the influence both of *r* and *w*. (Comp. Ags. *wearm*, N. E. *warm*.)

v. 5. *Wo*, also *wai*, *wa*, N. E. *wo* or *woe*, from the Ags. *wá*, subst. indecl., which, according to Mätzner and Wedgewood, is simply the interj. *wá* used as a subst. Ettm. on the contrary regards it as a contraction of the subst. *váva*, calamitas. Even an adj. *wo*, sorrowful, comparat. *woer*, is given by Halliwell.

v. 6. *Joie*. See v. 7.

v. 6. *Mirth*. Ags. *myrd*, *mird*.

v. 7. *Trecherie* or *tricherie*, N. E. *treachery* from O. Fr. *tricherie*. The Fr. termination *-ie* was at first generally retained. But the Fr. words must at last submit to the Engl. law of accentuation, and the termination being thus less distinctly pronounced it was changed into *-y*. Both endings still occur in the works of Shakespeare. In this song *-ie* is commonly used, as *joie* (v. 6), *envie* (v. 63), *felonie* (v. 64); *-y* only in *fairy* (v. 10) and *ribauby* (v. 9). Also the Fr. *é* (or *ée*) was long unaltered as in *cuntre* (v. 29) (or *cuntray* v. 228), then it was changed into *ee* (*é*) or *ie*, as in *countree* (Chaucer), till at last it assumed the term. *-y*, country. In *Kyng Alisaunder* a curious form occurs, "the men of that *cuntrere*" (v. 4,891). — For O. Fr. *maisnée*,

meisnée O. E. has the form meynee (v. 46) or meynee, in Shakespeare meiny; this word is now obsolete, but its derivative menial, adj. and subst., is still in use.

v. 7. Gile see v. 319.

v. 8. Auentour, also auntour or aunter, Fr. aventure; the original d reappears in the N. E. adventure.

v. 8. While, Ags. hwíl or hwíle. The transposition of h and w in the beginning of words was common already in S.-Sax. The pronunciation at first remained unchanged, but very early h must have ceased to be generally sounded, as may be inferred from such forms as wo and were, for who and where *).

v. 9. Bourde, bourd (Chaucer) or boord, now obsolete, a jest, a joke; Fr. bourde, a lie, from O. Fr. behord (Diez).

v. 9. Ribaudy, Kyng Alis. v. 21 ribaudye. N. E. ribaldry, the original al being in N. E. generally used instead of Fr. au; l is then either pronounced as in this word, or mute as in balm, Fr. baume.

v. 10. Fairy, O. Fr. faérie, Fr. féerie. It has here and often in the old language (as in Kyng Alisaunder v. 6924) retained the French signification, enchantment, illusion; afterwards it assumed that of Fr. fée, Engl. fay, although this termination is generally used to denote a continued activity, or a quality, as fishery, pedantry, ribaldry.

12. Loue, Ags. luf, lufe. For Ags. u O. E. uses o or sometimes u as sone v. 54 or sune, Ags. sunu tong (v. 106), Ags. tunge (N. E. tongue with Fr. spelling), wonder (v. 34), Ags. wundor, or ou as in stounde (v. 52), Ags. stund (obsolete in N. E.) and (v. 148) hounde (or honde) Ags. hund; N. E. has o or u, both pronounced with the same, short sound, for ex. sun, Ags. sunne, and son, Ags. sunu; also ou, either with the sound of au, as in hound or of ô, as in mourning, O. E. morning (v. 297), Ags. murnung, this sound being sometime given by oo, as in door, O. E. dore (. 183), Ags. dur.

v. 14. Rime, Ags. rím, number, computation, O. Fr. rime, considered to be of Germ. etymon, but influenced by Lat. rhythmus, which may account for the N. E. form rhyme.

*) Marsh. Lectures.

v. 15. King or kyng, Ags. cyning or cyng, from cyn, kindred, race, with the termination -ing, denoting descendant of, son of (as in lording, sir, master v. 21). The primitive meaning would thus be: the son of the people, originally perhaps the man *κατ' ἐξοχήν*, just as queen signified woman in general (Mueller).

v. 16. Mervaille, or merveyle, even the form marvoyle occurs in Morris, O. Fr. merveil. Ai and ei were used without any phonetic difference and represented also Fr. oi, as in O. E. palfray (v. 58) or palfrey, N. E. palfrey, Fr. palfroi; Even in N. E. vacillating between ai and ei is not uncommon, as in vail and veil. The a in N. E. marvel is caused by the following r; comp. clerk (v. 2), now commonly pronounced clark; Fr. clerc.

v. 17. Harp, Ags. hearpe, the primitive a returning instead of Ags. ea before r, and also before l as in hall (v. 45), Ags. heall, wall (v. 151), Ags. weall. In the same way Ags. sceamu becomes Engl. shame.

v. 17. Gle or glee, Ags. glig, gliw, gleó, gleow, mirth, song. Thus w is often dropped, as in O. E. tre, N. E. tree, Ags. treó or treow (or triw) and O. E. kne (v. 159), N. E. knee, Ags. cneó, cneow.

v. 17. Game, Ags. gamen, the final n being generally left out; compare Ags. æfen, N. E. eve, Ags. mylen, N. E. mill.

v. 22. Frain or Freine. O. Fr. Freisne. See v. 16. It is here borrowed from the Fr. song but was not introduced into the Engl. language. For the use of le for the Fr. del compare Mary le Strand and Mary le Bow, still used names of churches in London.

v. 29. Knyght or knight, Ags. cniht, cneoht, the latter form showing the troubling influence of h on the preceeding vowel in Ags., whereas in Engl., where this guttural especially when followed by t, is less distinctly or not at all pronounced, it makes the sound of the vowel more open and clear. Also when Ags. i by the influence of h is changed in ea, the original letter is restored in Engl., as Ags. miht or meaht, Engl. might (v. 37 almight); Ags. niht or neaht, Engl. night.

v. 31. Liif, Ags. lif, v. 32 wiif, Ags. wif. Already in Ags. a double vowel is often found instead of the mark of quantity, as tiid for tid, gees for gés (geese). Rask. A final e is added in the later forms life and wife; some remarks on the origin of this important letter will here be expedient. It is either organic, founded on the primitive form of the word, or unorganic, when it is of no etymological importance. In the former case it generally corresponds to the Ags. terminations a, e, u, as for ex. Ags. tíma, dúfe, sceamu (or scamu), Engl. time (v. 13), dove, shame (v. 68); or it is produced by the transposition of the termination el or er, as in N. E. idle, O. E. idel, Ags. ídel. Unorganic it is for inst. in wife and life (in the verb to live it is organic, Ags. lífan) or in one, none, Ags. án, nán. In O. E. the e final, especially the organic, is of much more frequent occurrence than in N. E., which may be attributed partly to the numerous remnants of the old terminations, that had not yet become altogether unfamiliar, partly to the influence of the French use of this letter. It was in O. E. generally pronounced, though in this respect the custom seems to have been arbitrary and vacillating, especially in poetry, till at length it lost its articulation and became mute. Childe (v. 34), Ags. cild, vacillates still in N. E. both in spelling and pronunciation; the common form is child, but there also occurs childe, with a somewhat different signification and pronounced both child and child.

v. 33. Leuedi, leuedy, leuede, Ags. hláfdige, a contraction of hláf-weardige. Thus Ags. æ is generally represented by O. E. e, in N. E. mostly by ē as in deed, O. E. dede (v. 102), Ags. dæd, but sometimes by ā as in lady. Of a similar origin is lord (v. 46) O. E. laverd, from Ags. hláford for hláf-weard, Ags. á being in O. E. replaced by a, or sometimes by o as wo (v. 5), in N. E. generally by o as lord and woe.

v. 38. Messenger, messenger, messagyr (Morr.), O. Fr. messagier. Such an insertion of n very often occurs before dental and guttural g, as in passenger, Fr. passager, nightingale; also before dental c and before s, as in O. E. ensamplle (v. 27).

v. 38. Hight, or heght, in N. E. generally written height; Ags. heádo. See v. 29. Here an-high is used instead of the common an-heh, or an-heiq, on high.

v. 39. Neighebour, or neghbour, Ags. neáh-búr or neáh-gebúr. Gebúr, a dweller, a farmer. The old spelling (ei pronounced as ā) is retained in N. E. neighbour, but the adj. has the form nigh. Thus Ags. ú generally becomes ou (seldom ow) in O. E., as (v, 59) hous (or hus), Ags. hús, (v. 259) mouth, Ags. múđ, (v, 71) bour, Ags. búr, and (v. 153) toun, Ags. tún; in N. E. both ou and ow are often used, as in house and mouth, bower and town, the sound of the diphtongs being in N. E. generally raised to that of au. Sometimes u is retained or changed into oo, as in boor, Ags. gebúr.

v. 40. Sithe, Ags. Sid, path; time, obsolete in N. E.

v. 42. Gossibbe, on account of the metre for gossib, Ags. godsib, a sponser at baptism, from God and sib, companionship, relation. In the Engl. form d has been left out, as in Engl. gospel, Ags. godspel. The N. E. gossip is no more used in the original signification.

v. 43. Nought, also noht (or noht) signifying, according to Morris, both *nothing* and *not*; Ags. náwith (or náwht, náht), a contraction of ne-á-wiht, *never-anything* (á, ever; wiht, an animal, wight, thing). In N. E. naught is subst., and not is the form of the neg. adv.

v. 44. Mete, Ags. mete, food in general, N. E. meat with the limited signification of flesh-meat. The present pronunciation of ea is of comparatively recent date; still in Shakespeare it seems to have had its original sound e (ě, ā).

v. 53. Maiden, Ags. mægden, dimin. of mægd, O. E. mayd or maid; Ags. g being in S.-Sax. often softened into ġ, as in magġden (also mæide), in Engl. it is changed in i or y.

v. 53. Knaue, Ags. cnapa or cnafa, boy, servant, N. E. knave; the change of Ags. f in to Engl. v is very common; it has taken place also in heaven (v. 80), older form heven, from Ags. heofon.

v. 56. Sond or Sonde, messenger, in Kyng Alisaunder it is used in the sense of message, message, from Ags. sond or sond, a mission, a messenger. Godes Sond, Messias. The word seems to have disappeared from the language at a very early period (Halliwell).

v. 57. Erand, also arande, erande, Ags. ærend, Ags. æ being in O. E. represented by a or e, as Ags. æsc, O. E. esh or (v. 26) ash, Ags. hæp, O. E. hap, Ags. gæst, O. E. gest (v. 258); in N. E. generally by a as ash and day, or e, as in guest, the spelling of which has been influenced by the French use of the letter u, sometimes also by ea, as stead O. E. stede (v. 184), Ags. stæde.

v. 58. tiding, tythings (R. G.), tithing (R. B.), tiding (Chaucer), N. E. generally employs the plur. form tidings; from the verb tidan, to betide, to happen. It may be considered either as a subst., the termin. -ing (Ags. -ung or -ing) being frequently used to form subst. out of verbs, or, like the corresponding S.-Sax. word tipennde, it may be the part. act. of the same verb. The latter would indeed seem the most probable, but for the frequent occurrence of this word, before that partic. had yet commonly assumed the termin. -ing.

v. 63. Woman, Ags. wifman, Lag. wifmon, wimmon, woman (also wommon). The o in the latter form must be attributed to the influence of w, which already in Ags. troubled a following i as wudu for widu, O. E. wude or wode (v. 142), wood. In the pronunciation of the N. E. plural, women, the i sound is retained.

v. 66. Conseiler, Fr. conseiller. For the changed sound of the vowel in other O. E. forms as counseiler (Kyng Alisaunder) and counselor see v. 249. N. E. has different forms for the two significations of the word, counsellor and counsellor, this distinction being however, according to Worcester, of recent date.

v. 68. ende, Ags. ende, N. E. end.

v. 72. Dishonour. The O. Fr. terminations -or, -ur, -our and -eur are often represented by O. E. -our, in N. E. generally by or as in favor and honor. The same tendency for a broader sound we find in the O. E. use of -ioun for

-ion as (v. 154) religioun (v. 270) enchesoun (= occasion), O. Fr. enchainon; or of -oun instead of -on as orisoun (v. 160) for orison. On account of the accent being changed, the sound was afterwards shortened.

v. 78. Y-fere, in fere, Morris; Lag. (in the passage cited by Marsh) ifere, from Ags. færor fer, an expedition, a journey. The O. E. has also the subst. fere, a mate, a companion, Ags. fera; in N. E. only fare, corresponding to Ags. faru (= færor), is retained, but the original signification has been changed, except, perhaps, in war-fare.

v. 90. Dome or dom, Midd. E. and N. E. doom, Ags. dóm. This transition of Ags. ó is the most common; compare Ags. mód, O. E. mode, Midd. E. and N. E. mood.

v. 103. Leman or lefinan (R. Gloucester) sweatheart, used both of a man and a woman; it is composed of O. E. lief or lef, dear, (Ags. leóf,) and man. The form lemman occurs in Shakespeare, but the word is now quite obsolete.

v. 106. Leighster a female liar. In Ags. the masc. form leogere is found, O. E. leigher or ligger. For the termination -ster, see page 24.

v. 107. Chaunce, O. Fr. chéance, Fr. chance. The change of Fr. a into au before n followed by another consonant was common in the O. E. and even more so in the Midd. E. period; in N. E. au is seldom used (as in staunch for stanch), the original a being generally restored. Au occurs still in Shakespeare as auncient for ancient. — Penance (v. 108), O. Fr. penance (or peneance), N. E. penance.

v. 109. Midwiif. The derivation of this word is uncertain; some suppose it to be connected with Ags. méd, O. E. mede, N. E. meed, which is rendered very probable also by the form medewif (or meedwiif) occurring in Wickliffe. Yet the derivation proposed by Mueller seems more natural; judging from the O. E. form mydwyve, N. E. midwife, he derives it from the prep. mid (or med), noticing the analogous formation of mid-lenting. Compare the Spanish comadre, Germ. Beifrau.

v. 131. Baudekine or baudekyn, O. Fr. baudequin, Fr. baldaquin, N. E. baldachin, a sort of fine cloth supposed

to have been brought from Bagdad (Baldacca); the name of this town is considered as the origin of the word.

v. 134. Ring, older form *rynge*, Ags. *hring*, *h* being in Engl. generally left out before *l*, *n* and *r*.

v. 134. Gold, Ags. *gold*.

v. 136. Silk or *selk*, Ags. *seoloc* or *seolc*. Ags. *eo* has already in O. E. nearly quite dissapeared; it is there generally replaced by *e* or *o*, the former being used even in some cases, where in N. E. *o* has been introduced, as in Ags. *leosan*, O. E. to *lese* (or *lose*), N. E. to *lose*. See (v. 17).

v. 137. Mende or *minde*, Ags. *mynd*. For Ags *y* O. E. uses *y*, *i* or *u*, as in O. E. *chyrche*, *chirche* (v. 132) and *churche* for Ags. *cyrice*; in N. E. *ī* is the most commonly used, sometimes *u*, as in *church*, seldom *i*, as in *mind*.

v. 140. Euentide; Ags. *æfen* or *efen*, O. E. *even*, N. E. *even* and *eventide*, often used in poetry. Already R. Gloucester has the forms *eue* and *euenynge* (Richardson), N. E. *eve* and *evening*.

v. 141. Heth or *heþe*, Ags. *heáð*, N. E. *heath*. See v. 229.

v. 142. Feld or *felde*, Ags. *feld* (or *fild*), N. E. *field*. This Ags. *e* is more commonly represented by N. E. *ē* (or *ea*) as in *weather*, O. E. *weder* v. 144, Ags. *weder*, sometimes by *a* as in *way*, v. 173.

v. 143. Winter, Ags. *winter*.

v. 144. Mone, Ags. *móna*, N. E. *moon*; in N. E. *monday* (Ags. *mónandag*) the sound of the vowel is shortened.

v. 145. Forest, O. Fr. *forest*, employed already by R. Gloucester (Richardson).

v. 148. Cokk or *coc*, Ags. *cocc*; the origin of the word is considered to be founded on an imitation of the cry of the bird (Diez).

v. 152. Stépel, Ags. *Stépel*, N. E. *steeple*, *e* in O. E. and, with some few exceptions, *ē* (as *cool*, Ags. *céle*) in N. E. corresponding to Ags. *ê*.

v. 154. Strete, Ags. *stræt* (Koch) (O. Fr. *estrée*) N. E., *street*, one of the few Latin words from the time of the Roman occupation.

v. 155. Nonne, Ags. nunnc, from the Latin nonna (Greek νόνη).

v. 169. Priis, prise, prys, O. Fr. preis, Fr. prix, N. E. price, this being the common transition of Latin ti and x in these languages; ex. Lat. pax, O. Fr. pais, O. E. pais or peis, N. E. peace. An other form, prize, was early in use; it is now obsolete in the signification of price, but is retained in that of the Fr. prise.

v. 170. Bodi, Ags. bodig, N. E. body the Ags. termination -ig generally losing the g; also in mani (v. 170) N. E. many, Ags. manig.

v. 172. Pell, pal (v. 220) O. Fr. pel, Fr. peau; in N. E. the word is scarcely used.

v. 175. Foul, Ags. fugol, N. E. fowl. The change of Ags. g into w was very common already in S.-Sax., as in fogel or fowel, and even sometimes in Ags. this change took place (Koch).

v. 175. Bough, Ags. bóg, Old Norse bógr; an analogous change occurs in plough (v. 176), not found in Ags. literature, Old Norse plógr.

v. 178. Waye, also weie, wei; Ags. weg; for the change of the vowel see v. 142, and v. 43.

v. 179. Porter, Fr. portier, the Fr. termination -ier (O. Fr. -ier, -or, -er) being in Engl. generally changed in er. To the influence of this word the N. E. form porter, for Fr. porteur, may perhaps be ascribed, Fr. -eur being commonly represented by Engl. -or.

v. 180. Office, Fr. office.

v. 180. Clos, or close, an enclosure of any kind, N. E. close also termination, end from the Fr. partic. clos, Compare Fr. cas, O. E. cas (v. 23), N. E. case, and Fr. lacs, O. E. las or lace (v. 136), N. E. lace.

v. 181. Belle, Ags. belle, N. E. bell.

v. 181. Taper, Ags. taper (tapur) of uncertain origin.

v. 182. Boke, Ags. bók, N. E. book. See v. 90.

v. 187. Theue or peve, Ags. þeóf, píf; for Ags. eó N. E. generally has a long e, either ie as in thief and in priest, O. E. preste or prest v. 221, Ags. preóst, or ee, see v. 17.

v. 194. Dauhter, Ags. dohtor. The Ags. aspirate h is in O. E. frequently softened into g (R. Gloucester dogter), and, though afterwards strengthened by a g, it has in N. E. almost entirely ceased to be sounded, as for inst. in daughter. See v. 29.

v. 198. Cold or cald, Ags. ceald.

v. 201. Barm, bosom, Ags. bearm; after the time of Chaucer this word does not appear in the literature See v. 17.

v. 203. Masse, Ags. mæsse, messe, N. E. mass.

v. 206. M^orning, morwnynge (Morris), morwening (R. Gloucester), also the form morwe, Ags. morgen or morn; for the change of g into w see v. 175; for the apocope of n see v. 17. In O. E. w is sometimes preceded by e (as sorewe for sorwe); this indistinct vowel being in N. E. replaced by the fuller o, the following w becomes mute; so in morrow (and sorrow). Morn and morrow are scarcely used but in poetry and in the expression to-morrow.

v. 218. Kin, Ags. cyn.

v. 221. Abbesse; Ags. has the complete form abbu-disse (masc. abbud or abbod) and abedissee, in the latter u is weakened into e. The contracted form abbesse (Fr. abbesse, O. Fr. abbéesse) occurs already in R. Gloucester. Abbey (v. 179) Fr. abbaye, O. Fr. abbéie.

v. 222. Fun-stone or font-stone, Ags. font, baptismal font, Fr. font(s). The other form of this word, fount (see v. 12), was early used in the sense of fountain.

v. 226. Language, also the Fr. form language (R. Gloucester). U is here pronounced like w, and belongs to the root (as in languid), although Fr. has left it out as useless before a.

v. 229. Yer, year (R. Gloucester) or ger (Morris), Ags. gear, gér, N. E. year. Ags. eá or é being generally changed into O. E. e, N. E. ē (ea or ee); Ags. g in the beginning of words is often retained both in O. and N. E., as in guest, sometimes in O. E. softened into g or y, N. E. y, as in Ags. geól, O. E. gol, yule, N. E. yule.

v. 230. Nece, O. Fr. niepce, Fr. nièce, N. E. niece; compare O. Fr. chief O. E. chef, N. E. chief. In O. E. there is also another form nipte (Halliwell), grand-daughter,

Ags. nift, Germ. Nichte (for Nifte); both the Ags. masc. nefa and Fr. neveu may be considered as having contributed to the N. E. masc. nephew. In the verse 288 nece gives no sense, unless we suppose it to be used instead of aunt (Ellis).

v. 235. Manhed, manhood, »here used for the relation of consanguinity», Ellis. In O. E. -hed or -hede (even -hod as in maydenhod, Morris) corresponds to Ags. hād, person, state, degree, this word being even in Ags. frequently used in compositions. The sound of the O. E. termination -hed, is retained in the still usual form -head, as in maiden-head for maidenhood and godhead (= deity).

v. 238. Fader, Ags. fæder; Mother, Ags. módor; Brother, Ags. bróðor. The use of th was in O. E. very little fixed; thus father and mother were early spelt both with d and th. However broder is scarcely used for brother, which may be attributed to the ð in the Ags. form; yet the interchange between these letters, even when derived from Ags. ð, is not rare in O. E., as pad for path, Ags. pað. — Cloth (v. 242), Ags. clád; the verb to clothe, O. E. clode, Ags. cláðjan.

v. 238. Soster, suster, Ags. sweoster (for swister). Ags. sw in the beginning of words is mostly retained in O. E., sometimes, as here, w is left out. The change of the original i into Ags. eo, Lag. and O. E. o or u, was effected by the troubling influence of w; nevertheless i often reappeared and of many words there occur forms both with i and with u (o); thus sister is met with already in the O. E. period. In N. E. i (or ē) is the most common.

v. 239. Conseyl, Fr. conseil. See v. 249.

v. 246. Fe, Ags. feoh, cattle, goods, money; in the signification of cattle it sometimes occurs in O. E., often in the sense of money (Coleridge). In N. E. the former signification is lost and the latter somewhat restricted, the usual form, fee, signifying only a gratuitous compensation. This Ags. eo is in N. E. seldom, as in fee, represented by a lengthened i (ē), often by a raised sound of this vowel (ī; see v. 29) but generally by ĭ, ĕ or o, O. E. mostly e or o (see v. 136); ea sometimes occurs for ĕ, as heaven, O. E. heuen (v. 79), Ags. heofon.

v. 249. Renoun, sometimes also the form renome, corresponding to the O. Fr. renom, is met with in the earlier literature. The change of Fr. o in ou before n often occurs in O. E. and also in N. E., as in counsel and in noun, O. Fr. nom, non or nun; sometimes it is changed into ow as in N. E. renown.

v. 256. Turnament, Marie's original has the form turneielement, N. E. tournament. This is the most common transition of the Fr. u; compare also O. Fr. cuntrée, O. E. cuntre, N. E. country. Yet o is sometimes used, as in contre and in tornemens (R. Gloucester).

v. 261. Damisel, O. Fr. damoiselle or damoisele (in Marie's original); R. Gloucester has damysel, Gower damoysselle, Chaucer uses the form damosel; in the N. E. form damsel the vacillating vowel is left out, and a strong accent is put on the first syllable. Dame (v. 60), Fr. dame.

v. 262. Semblaunt, Fr. semblant, appearance. This word occurs still in Spenser, who uses the Fr. form, which is sometimes employed even as an adj.; it is now obsolete and replaced by resemblance.

v. 262. Gentrise, nobleness, civility, O. Fr. gentrise; this word is of frequent occurrence in O. E. In the same signification even the N. E. gentry is sometimes used by Shakespeare, but in the language of the present day this sense of the word is obsolete.

v. 263. Eighen, pl. of eighe, Ags. eáge. Ags. eá being commonly changed into O. E. e, N. E. ē or ě (ea). The (i) of the vowel in O. E. eige and aie, N. E., eye, must be attributed to the softening of g; when, therefore, gh is retained, as in eighe, the pronunciation of these letters must be considered to have been far less sharp and distinct in this word than in the older form eghe.

v. 263. Rode or rude even rody (Kyng Alis.) complexion, Ags. rudu, redness; now only the adj. ruddy is used.

v. 274. Godenisse, goodness, Ags. gódness, the termination -nes, -nys, -nis being added to adj. to form abstract substantives denoting quality or state.

v. 276. Rent, Fr. rente.

v. 278. Recet, resset (Kyng Alis.) place of refuge, O. Fr. recet, recept; N. E. receipt has a different meaning.

v. 283. Bihest, vow, promise, from the Ags. behæs. With the very common suffix t; compare bequest from Ags. cviiss, sermo (Mätzner) and several old genitives used as particles, as amidst, Ags. to middes. — For hest (the ten hestes, R. Brunne) the form hes is sometimes used (Coleridge). Bihest as well as the cognate form behight, (formerly also behot and behet, now obsolete forms), Ags. behát, are seldom used in N. E.

v. 284. Gloseing, flattery, cajoling, N. E. glozing, gloze (from Ags. glêsan, this verb uniting the signification of Engl. to gloss (from γλῶσσα) and to gloze (from Old Norse glossi, brightness). Mueller.

v. 285. Wille, Ags. willa, strong desire, passion, will; in the firstnamed senses this word is used by early English writters. Halliwell.

v. 289. Pouwere for power (R. Gloucester). O. Fr. povir, pouvoir, pover. The Fr. o, u, ou are in this way frequently transformed into Engl. ow, both at the end of a syllable, as in dower, O. Fr. doaire, Fr. douaire, and at the end of a word, as Engl. vow for O. Fr. vou, veu.

v. 299. Castel, this form was used also by Wickliffe, already R. Gloucester employed the now usual form castle; O. Fr. Castel, or Casteau.

v. 310. Wedlock; Ags. wedlác a pledge, formed of wed, an earnest, a promise, and lác gift, offering. Wedlock is here, as in N. E., used in the sense of Ags. wiflác, marriage; it formerly had even the signification of wife (Worcester). As a subst. wed seems to have early ceased to be used, Richardson cites it from no author of later date than Gower; but the verb, to wed, is frequently employed, always, however signifying to marry, never to pledge.

v. 310. Air, also heyre, O. Fr. hoir and heir, N. E. heir; for the sound of the diphtong compare v. 16. In the derivative hiritage (v. 314) the vowel has been simplified, as is also the case in the Fr. form, héritage.

v. 315. Mariage, marriage, Fr. mariage. This word is, beside heritage and language, the only instance in this

song of the Fr. termin. -age, which already in O. E. was frequently used for the formation of abstract as well as concrete subst.

v. 319. Forward, foreward, a contract, an agreement, Ags. foreweard, formed of Ags. weard, watch, or of the verb. weardjan (Richardson). It is now obsolete as a subst., but the adv. forward, Ags. foreweard frequently occurs. The latter part of this adv. is derived from the Ags. adj. weard, vergens, used only in compositions, and is commonly employed as an adverbial termin. indicating direction; often a Genitive s is retained, as in forwards. Numerous derivatives of this root are found in all Germanic languages (see Diefenbach), and a considerable number has been imported even into languages of Latin origin, as for instance the Fr. words garde and garder. In N. E. double forms, ward and guard, are found of this word; the former is derived direct from the Ags. source, the latter has been influenced by the Fr. forms. The same letter-change appears in the Engl. words wile and guile, O. E. gile (v. 7), both properly of the same root, but one corresponding to the Ags. wile, the other to the O. Fr. guile.

v. 320. Treuthe, other O. E. forms are trouthe and truthe, Ags. treowde, treóð, a derivative of the adj. treówe, true (Ettmüller). N. E. troth or truth.

v. 324. Tvinnes, Ags. getvinne from the adj. tvinn, duplex. (Ettmüller); this Ags. form is always used as plur.; Bosworth gives a sing. getwín, a twin.

v. 329. Bride, Ags. bryð, brid.

v. 333. Bishop or bishop, Ags. biscop.

v. 333. Fail, deficiency, omission; the verb to fail is of more frequent use, from Fr. faillir.

v. 333. Lond or land, even in Ags. lond or land; this vacillation between a and o was in Ags. and O. E. very common, especially before n. Compare, Ags. and O. E. hand and hond (v. 191) man and mon, sand and sond (v. 56).

v. 334. Spusseayl, N. E. spousal, O. Fr. espousaille.

Grammatical remarks.

Gender.

The Ags. distinction of three different genders was retained in the English language; yet a wide divergence from the Ags. was made in a very important point, viz the abolition of grammatical gender. — This change was a natural and necessary result of the development of the language. — The obscure causes, which once produced the distinction of grammatical gender having ceased to be felt, this distinction depended entirely upon grammatical forms. When therefore these forms were simplified, when the clearer terminations had been weakened to an indistinct *e* or altogether left out, when the declension of substantives no longer varied according to difference of gender, and the articles and pronouns had ceased by peculiar forms to indicate this difference, the niceties of the old distinctions could no longer be observed, and a new principle was gradually established. This principle made the difference of gender depend chiefly upon natural sex, objects without sex being considered as neuters. Yet the old system was in many respects adhered to, especially where, as in the Southern dialects, the article long remained inflected. — In this song the grammatical gender is always abandoned; the original neuter maiden is used as a feminine (in v. 138 "it" is by a mistake used for "hir"), this being probably the case also with *wiif*, which in Ags., sometimes even in O. E., is a neuter, and with the original masc. woman. Child is always neuter; in v. 210 the gender is marked by the old dative of the pers. pron., *him*.

The distinction between masc. and fem. is made:

- a) by employing a different word for each sex, the corresponding masc. and fem. being in our song the same as in N. E., as for inst. father, mother, lord, lady, etc.
- b) by addition of terminations. In this respect the Ags. power of distinction is considerably weakened, the

chief Ags. terminations of gender, a for masc. and e for fem., being both expressed by e. Yet the fem. termination -ster, Ags. -istre, is sometimes retained, as in leighster (v. 106), but in N. E. even in this case the same form is employed both for masc. and fem., -ster being in this period scarcely used as indicating the fem. gender, but in huckster and spinster; as a masc. termin. it is more common, and for denoting of the fem. a new termination must be added, as in semstress. Of more frequent occurrence is Fr. termination -esse, as in abbesse (v. 204), N. E. -ess.

Declension.

The numerous Ags. declensions were reduced to one, and by the levelling tendency of the new language even the terminations of the remaining declension were mostly dropped. This certainly was an important diviation from the Ags. Yet there was no abrupt departure from the grammatical structure of that language, for by the general confusion of the old terminations, chiefly by the frequent employing of -es instead of all other genitive- and even plural-endings this reform had been prepared in already S.-Sax.

The O. E. proceeded furthur still in its tendency to uniformity of termination; it quite abandoned the complicated Ags. system, retaining only the distinction of the plur. from the sing. and that of the Genitive from the other cases.

The plur. is in O. E. formed by the addition of -es to the stem-form of the subst. This termin., corresponding to the Ags. masc. ending -as, was as has been observed, in S.-Sax. frequently employed in all forms of the plur. It is sometimes changed into -is (-ys), but its shortening to -s after certain consonants, so common in N. E., scarcely occurs but after r.

Some exceptions from the above-given general rule are found in this song; they form their plur.:

- a) by adding the termination -en, as eighen (v. 263), the form eyen is used still by Chaucer, S.-Sax. egene, Ags. eāgan; and sostren (v. 324), S.-Sax. sustren, Ags.

sweostra, compare the still occasionally used plur. bretheren, S.-Sax. breðeren, Ags. bróðra. This termin. was in O. E. often employed especially in the Southern dialects, and like -es it was used even without being founded on a corresponding Ags. termination, as hunden, Ags. hundas. In N. E. it is retained only in oxen and children.

- b) by adding the termin. -er, only in childer (v. 69) or childre, S. Sax. childer, Ags. cildra, cildru. This word received very early a second termin. -en or -n, and already in R. Gloucester we find the modern form children.
- c) by change of the root-vowel, as man, plur. men.
- d) or the sing. form is retained in the plur., as thing v. 4 and 57. The words so used being generally Ags. neuters, this form of the plur. is explained as a remainder of the old declension of neuters (Rask, Second Decl. first class), which made no difference between sing. and plur. Yet the use of the plur. thing in the above-cited verses may perhaps be attributed to the want of rhyme, the inflected form things (v. 11) being always employed, where the versification permitted it. In the same way hous is used as plur. in v. 151. Wiif and yer were also neuters in Ags., and even in O. E. they commonly employed the same form for sing. and plur., but in this song they occur only in sing. — Some of these uninflected plurals are retained in N. E., either always uninflected, as sheep and deer, or in special significations receiving the common plur. ending, as horse, plur. horse and horses.

But in those times of linguistic confusion and dissolution not only neuters but also other substantives, inflected both in Ags. and S.-Sax., sometimes made no difference between sing. and plur. Thus we find in this song, v. 40, sithe for sithes, though, perhaps, even in this case the unusual form has been employed on account of the rhyme. — The expression (hye was) of xii winter eld (v. 232) is by Ellis changed into: (sche was) twelve winter eld; then eld is an adj. (Ags. eald or ald) and winter affords another example

of the uninflected plur. As the passage is given by Weber *eld* is a subst. (Ags. *eld* or *yldo*), and *winter* must be considered as a Genitive plur.

Case.

Of the Ags. case-distinctions only that of the Genitive is retained in the English, and even this case has undergone considerable changes; the old terminations are all dropped except that of the strong masculines and neuters, the Genitive-ending of these substantives, *-es*, having displaced all other terminations of that case, even in the plural.

The Genitive is in O. E. formed by addition of the termination *-es* (or *-is*) to the stem-form of the substantive. In N. E. *-es* is shortened into *-s*.

This new rule was, however, by no means free from exceptions in O. E.; several words indicating relationship often remained uninflected in the sing., and the plur. is frequently found without any termination, or it is formed in *-ene* instead of *-es*. In this song the general rule is always followed, except, perhaps, by the above-mentioned "winter" (v. 232).

As a retribution for the great losses in terminations, the preposition *of* was early introduced as a sign of the Genitive. Already in *Lagamon* it often occurs, as for instance "the ord of than sword" in the extract given by Marsh.

In O. E. grammars not only the Genitive but also the Dative is stated to be indicated by a special mark of case, the termination *-e*. As however, at least in this song, this termination is most irregularly employed, we may well regard the inflexion or non-inflexion of the Dative as depending upon the arbitrary use of the final *e* in O. E., which has already been noticed. Yet it must be observed that words used in the Dative, more commonly than other words retain thise, the only remnant of their old terminations.

Having been informed that only a very limited number of Weber's "Metrical Romances" are to be had, we have thought it necessary to add a complete copy of Lay le Freine.

LAY LE FREINE.

WE redeth oft, and findeth y-write,
And this clerkes wele it wite,
Layes that ben in harping,
Ben y-founde of ferli thing:
Sum bethe of wer, and sum of wo,
Sum of joie and mirthe also,
And sum of trecherie and of gile,
Of old auentours that fel while;
And sum of bourdes and ribaudy,
And many ther beth of fairy;
Of al thinges that men seth,
Maist o loue forsothe thai beth.

10

In Breteyne bi hold time,
This layes were wrought, so seith this rime:
When kinges might our y-here
Of ani meruailes that ther were,
Thai token an harp in gle and game,
And maked a lay and yaf it name.
Now of this auentours that weren y-falle,
Y can tel sum, ac nought alle:
Ac herkeneth lordinges sothe to sain,
Ichil you telle Lay le Frain.
Bifel a cas in Briteyne,

20

Whereof was made Lay le Frain,
 In Ingliche for to tellen, y-wis,
 Of ane asche, forsothe it is,
 On ensammple fair withalle
 That sum time was bifalle.

In the west cuntrè woned tway knyghtes
 And loued hem wele in al ryghtes; 30
 Riche men, in her best liif,
 And aither of hem hadde wedded wiif.
 That o knight made his leuedi milde
 That sche was wonder gret with childe;
 And when hir time was comen tho,
 Sche was deliuerd out of wo.
 The knight thonked God Almighty,
 And cleped his messenger an hight.
 "Go, he seyde, to mi neighebour swithe,
 "And say, Y gret him fele sithe, 40
 "And pray him that he com to me;
 "And say he schal mi gossibbe be."
 The messenger goth and hath nought foryete;
 And finte the knight at his mete,
 And fair he gret in the halle
 The lord, the leuedi, the meynè alle:
 And seththen on knes down him sett,
 And the lord ful fair he gret:
 "He bad that thou schult to him tē,
 "And for loue his gossibbe be." — 50
 "Is his leuedi deliuerd with sounde?" —
 "Ya, sir, y-thonked be God the stounde!" —
 "And whether a maiden child other a knaue?" —
 "Tway sones, sir, God hem saue!" —
 The knyght therof was glad and blithe,
 And thonked Godes sond swithe;
 And graunted his erand in al thing,
 And yaf him a palfray for his tiding.
 Than was the leuedi of the hous
 A proude dame and an envious, 60
 Hokerfulliche missegging,
 Squeymous and eke scorning;

To ich woman sche hadde envie.

Sche spac this wordes of felonie:

"Ich haue wonder, thou messenger,

"Who was thi lordis conseiler

"To teche him about to sende,

"And telle schame, in ich an ende,

"That his wiif hath to childer y-bore.

"Wele may ich man wite therfore,

70

"That tvay men hir han hadde in bour;

"That is hir bothe deshonour!"

The messenger was sore aschamed.

The knight himself was sore agramed,

And rebouked his leuedy,

To speke ani woman vilaynie.

And ich woman therof might here,

Curssed hir alle y-fere,

And bisought God in heuen,

For his holy name seuen,

80

That yif hye euer ani child schuld abide,

A wers auentour hir schuld bitide.

Sone therafter bifel a cas,

That herself with child was.

When God wild sche was unbounde,

And deliuerd, al with sounde:

To maiden childer sche hadde y-bore.

When hye it wist, wo hir was therfore:

"Allas, she seyde, that this hap come!

"Ich haue y-youen min owen dome:

90

"For boden bite ich woman

"To speken ani other harm opon *).

"Falsliche another Y gan deme:

"The selue happe is on me sene.

"Allas, sche seyde, that Y was born!

"Withouten ende ich am forlorn,

"Or ich mot siggen sikerly,

*) These two verses are thus explained by Weber: "I blame every woman, as forbidden to speak harm of another?" This gives little if any sense, nor does it agree with the text. We would rather consider "bite" to be wrongly used for bith (bithe) the common O. E. form for the 3rd sing. of to be. The translation would then be: Every woman is forbidden to etc.

"That tway men han y-ly me by;
 "Or ich mot, — that God it schilde! —
 "Help to sle min owhen child.
 "On of this thre thinges ich mot nede
 "Sigge, other don, in dede.
 "Yif ich say ich hadde a bi-leman,
 "That ich leighe meselue opon:
 "Than ich worth of old and yong
 "Be hold leighster and fals of tong.
 "Yete me is best take mi chaunce,
 "And sle me childe, and do penaunce."

100

Hir midwiif hye cleped hir to;
 "Anon, sche seyde, this child for-do,
 "And euer say thou, wher thou go,
 "That ich haue o child and na mo."
 The midwiif answerd thurchout al
 That hye nil, no hye ne schal.

110

[The levedi hadde a maiden fre,
 Who ther y-nurtured hade y-be,
 And fostered fair ful mony a yere;
 Sche saw her kepe this sori chere,
 And wepe, and syke, and crye, "Alas!"
 And thoughte to helpen her in this cas.
 And thus sche spake, this maiden ying,
 "So n'olde Y wepen for no kind thing:
 "But this o child wol I of-bare
 "And in a covent leue it yare.
 "Ne schalt thou be aschamed at al;
 "And whoso findeth this childe smal,
 "By Mary, bissful quene aboue,]
 "May help it for Godes love."

120

The leuedi graunted anone therto,
 And wold wele that it were y-do.
 Sche toke a riche baudekine
 That hir lord brought fram Constantine,
 And lapped the litel maiden therin;
 And toke a ring of gold fin,
 And on hir right arm it knitt
 With a lace of silke therin pilt:

130

And whoso hir founde schuld haue in mende,
That it were comen of riche kende.

The maide toke the childe hir mide,
And stale oway in an euentide, 140
And passed ouer a wild heth;
Thurch feld and thurch wode hye geth
Al the winter-long night.

The weder was clere, the mone was light,
So that hye com bi a forest side:
Sche wax al weri and gan abide.
Sone after she gan herk
Cokkes crowe, and houndes berk.
Sche arose and thider wold;
Ner and nere she gan bihold. 150
Walles and hous fele hye seighe;
A chirche, with stepel fair and heighe;
Than nas ther noither strete no toun,
Bot an hous of religioun:

An order of nonnes, wele y-dight,
To seruy God both day and night.
The maiden abode no lengore;
Bot yede hir to the chirche-dore,
And on kneis she sat adoun,
And seid wepeand her orisoun: 160
"O Lord, he seyd, Jesu Crist,
"That sinful man bedes herst,
"Vnderfong this present,
"And help this seli innocent,
"That it mot y-cristned be,
"For Marie loue, thi moder fre!" —

Hye loked vp, and bi hir seighe
An asche, bi hir, fair and heighe,
Wele y-bowed, of michel priis;
The bodi was holow as mani on is. 170
Therin she leyed the child, for cold,
In the pel as it was bifold;
And blisted it with al hir might.
With that it gan to dawe light;
The foules up, and song on bough,

And acre-men yede to the plough.
 The maiden turned oyain anon,
 And tok the waye he hadde er gon.

The porter of the abbay aros,
 And dede his ofice in the clos; 180
 Rong the belles and taperes light,
 Leyd forth bokes, and al redi dight.

The chirche dore he vndede,
 And seighe anon in the stede
 The pel liggen in the tre,
 And thoughte wele that it might be,
 That theues hadde y-robbed sumwhare,
 And gon therforth, and lete it thare.

Therto he yede and it vnwond,
 And the maiden child therin he fond. 190

He tok it up bitven his hond,
 And thonked Jesu Cristes sond:
 And hom to his hous he it brought,
 And tok it his douhter, and hir bisought,
 That hye schuld kepe it as sche can,
 For sche was melche and couthe theran.
 Sche bad it souke and it nold,
 For it was neighe ded for cold.

Anon fer sche alight,
 And warmed it wele aplight. 200
 Sche yaf it souke opon hir barm,
 And seththen laid it to slepe warm.

And when the masse was y-don,
 The porter to the abbesse com ful son:

"Madame, what rede ye of this thing?

"To-day, right in the morning,

"Sone after the first stounde,

"A litel maiden-childe ich founde

"In the holwe assche therout;

"And a pel him about; 210

"A ring, of gold also was there:

"Hou it com thider Y not nere."

The abbesse was awonderd of this thing:

"Go, hye seyde, on heigheing,

"And feche it hider, Y pray thè:

"It is welcom to God and to me.

"Ichil it help as Y can,

"And sigge it is mi kinswoman." —

The porter anon it gan forth bring,
With the pal, and with the ring.

220

The abbesse lete clepe a prest anon,
And lete it cristin in fun-ston:

And for it was in an asche y-founde
She cleped it Frain in that stounde.

The Freyns *) of the asche is a *freyn*
After the language of Breteyn,
Forthi, *le Frein* men clepeth this day
More than asche, in ich cuntray.

This Frein thriued fram yer to yer:

The abbesse nece men wend it were.

230

The abbesse her gan teche and beld.

Bi that hye was of xii. winter eld,

In al Ingland ther nas non

A fairer maiden than hye was on.

And when hye couthe ought of manhed

Hye bad the abbesse hir wis and rede,

Which were her kin, on or other,

Fader or moder, soster or brother.

The abbesse hir in conseyl toke:

To tellen hir hye nought forsoke,

240

Hou hye was founden in al thing;

And tok hir the cloth and the ring,

And bad hir kepe it in that stede;

And, ther-whiles she liued, so sche dede.

Than was ther in that cuntrè,

A riche knight of lond and fe,

Proud, and yong, and joliue;

And had nought yete y-wedded wiue.

He was stout, of gret renoun

And was y-cleped Sir Guroun.

250

He herd praise that maiden fre,

*) Freyns for name, a mistake of the transcriber. Ellis.

And seyð, he wald hir se.
 He dight him in the way anon,
 And joliflich thider he come;
 And bad his man sigge, verrament,
 He schuld toward a turnament.
 The abbesse and the nonnes alle,
 Fair him gret in the gest-halle:
 And damisel Frein, so hende of mouthe,
 Gret him faire as hye wele couthe;
 And swhe wele he gan deuise
 Her semblaunt, and hir gentrise,
 Her louesum eighen, her rode so bright,
 And comenced to loue hir anon-right:
 And thought hou he might take on,
 To haue hir to his leman.

260

He thought, "Yif ich com hir to
 "More than ichaue y-do,
 "The abbesse wil souchy gile,
 "And voide hir in a litel while."
 He compast another enchesoun
 To be brother of that religioun.
 "Madame, he seyð to the abbesse,
 "Y-loui wele in al godenisse:
 "Ichil yiue on and other,
 "Londes and rentes to bicom your brother,
 "That ye schul euer fare the bet,
 "When Y com to haue recet."

270

At fewe wordes thai ben at on:
 He graythes him and forth is gon.
 Oft he come, bi day and night,
 To speke with that maiden bright,
 So that, with his fair bihest,
 And with his gloseing atte lest,
 Hye graunted him to don his wille,
 When he wil, loude and stille.
 "Leman, he seyð, thou most lat be
 "The abbesse thi nece, and go with me:
 "For icham riche, of swithe powwere;
 "Thè finde bet than thou hast here."

280

290

The maiden grant, and to him trist,
 And stale oway that no man wist;
 With hir tok hye no thing
 Bot hir pel and hir ring.

When the abbesse gan asprie,
 That hye was with the knight owy,
 Sche made morning in hir thought
 And hir biment, and gained nought.
 So long she was in his castel,
 That al his meynè loued her wel. 300
 To riche and pouer she gan hir dresse,
 That al hir loued more and lesse;
 And thus sche lad with him hir liif
 Right as she hadde ben his wedded wiif.

His knightes come and to him speke,
 And holy chirche comandeth eke,
 Sum lordes douhter for to take,
 And his leman al forsake;
 And seyde, him were wel more feir,
 In wedlok to geten him an air, 310
 Than lede his liif with swiche on,
 Of was kin he knewe non:
 And seyde, "Her bisides is a knight,
 "That hath a douhter fair and bright,
 "That schal bere his hiritage;
 "Taketh hir in mariage."
 Loth him was that dede to do
 Ac atte last he graunt therto.

The forward was y-maked aright,
 And were at on, and treuthe plight. 320
 Allas! that he no hadde y-wite,
 Er the forward were y-smite,
 That hye, and his leman also,
 Sostren were and tvinnes to,
 Of o fader biyeten thai were;
 Of o moder born y-fere.
 That hye so ware nist non,
 Forsoth Y say, bot God alon!

The newe bride was grayd withalle
 And brought hom to the lordes halle. 330
 Hir fader com with hir also;
 The leuedi hir moder, and other mo.
 The bischop of the lond withouten fail
 Com to do the spusseyl.

[That maiden bird in bour bright,
 Le Codre sche was y-hight:
 And ther the gwestes had gamen and gle,
 And sayd to Sir Guroun joyfully:
 "Fairer maiden n'as neuer seen,
 Better than ash is hazle Y ween! 340
 (For in romaunce *Le Frain* ash is,
 And *Le Codre* hazle, y-wis.)

A gret fest than gan they hold
 With gle and pleasaunce manifold;
 And mo than al servauntes, the maid
 Y-hight Le Frain, as servant sped:
 Albe her herte wel nigh to-broke,
 No word of pride ne grame she spoke.
 The leuedi marked her simple chere,
 And gan to love her, wonder dere. 350
 Scant could sche feel more pine or reuth
 War it hir owen childe in sooth.
 Than to the bour the damsel sped,
 Whar graithed was the spousaile bed;
 Sche demed it was ful foully dight,
 And yll besemed a may so bright;
 So to her coffer quick she cam,
 And her riche baudekyn out-nam,
 Which from the abbess sche had got;
 Eayrer mantel n'as ther not; 360
 And deftly on the bed it layd;
 Her lord woulde thus be well apayd.
 Le Codre and her mother, thare,
 Ynsame unto the bour gan fare,
 But whan the leuedi that mantyll seighe
 Sche wel neighe swoned oway.
 The chamberleynt sche cleped tho,

But he ne wist of it no mo.

Then came that hendi maid Le Frain,

And the leuedi gan to her sain,

370

And asked, whose mantyll it ware?

Then answered that maiden fair:

"It is mine without lesing;

Y had it, togeder with this ringe.

Myne aunte tolde me a ferli cas,

Hou in this mantyll i-fold I was,

And hadde upon mine arm this ring,

Whanne I was y-sent to norysching."

Then was the leuedi astonied sore:

"Fair child! my doughter! Y thè bore!"

380

Sche swoned and was wel neighe ded,

And lay sikeand on that bed.

Her husbond was fet tho,

And sche told him al her wo,

Hou of her neighbour sche had missayn,

For sche was delyvered of childre twain;

And hou to children herself sche bore; —

"And that o child I of sent thore,

In a covent y-fostered to be;

And this is sche our doughter free;

390

And this is the mantyll, and this the ring

You gaf me of yore as a love-tokenyng."

The knight kissed his daughter hende

Oftimes, and to the bisschope wende:

And he undid the mariage strate,

And weddid Sir Guroun alsgate

To Le Frain his leman so fair and hend.

With them Le Codre away did wend,

And sone was spousyd with game and gle,

To a gentle knight of that countre.

400

Thus ends the lay of tho maidens bright,

Le Frain and Le Codre y-hight.]

